

The SUBSTANCE of
Sir Bartholomew Shower's SPEECH

At the Guild-Hall, Exon, August 19th, 1698.

UPON

Declaring the Poll for the Burgeſſes of that City Elected, to Serve in this
Preſent Parliament.



Gentlemen,

I Am ſorry that Sir Edward Seymore, my Partner, is not here preſent, to excuſe me from this trouble of making you a publick Addreſs of Thanks: I am ſure 'twou'd be then much better perform'd. I am never found of ſpeaking any thing in my own buſineſs, or concerning my ſelf; much leſs in ſo publick a manner, and upon ſuch an occaſion.

However, ſince ſomething of this kind is expected from me, I hope you will permit me to thank Mr. Sheriff for his Juſtice and Patience, the Clerks for their Pains and Care, and the Trier, Inspectors and Managers for their Temper and good Manners. I muſt own, I never knew more Civility, and leſs ill Uſage, in ſuch a troubleſom Affair, and where each Party is hearty and zealous for its Principle and Interests; unleſs it were from One, whom I muſt publickly take notice of, One of my own Profeſſion, who intruded himſelf into the Court with a Lye in his Mouth, pretending to be a Free-holder, which he was not, was buſie here beyond the Rules of Decency, and afterwards ſneak'd out of Court towards the End of the Poll; he is, I ſuppoſe, a Gentleman well known, and therefore I need not name him; but ſhall ever remember him according to his Deſerts.

Gentlemen, I am likewiſe to take notice of ſome Reflections, maliciously and falſly caſt upon me; particularly in that ſcandalous Libel, or Queries, poſted at the Guild-Hall; a baſe, mean and unmanly way of injuring a Gentleman's Reputation.

It hath been inſinuated, as if I was a Papiſt; whereas I never was preſent, or ever heard Maſs in my Life time. I was in the Service of the Late King, but ſo far from being a Papiſt, that I conſtantly was a Communicant in the Church of England; and never cou'd, nor ever ſhall believe Pope Pius's Creed.

It was pretended, to my Prejudice, as if I had been inclin'd to the Eighteen-Penny-Act. I thank God, the Church of England hath a competent Support, and I pray for its Continuance; but cannot well in that manner wiſh 'em more, leaſt it encreaſe the Envy againſt it, which is more than enough already: Tho' the Motion was made to Me, I thought it very Improper and Unſeaſonable, and ſo declar'd, eſpecially at a Time, when the People labour under ſuch, and ſo great Taxes and Payments, as they are hardly able to bear: The Report therefore was Malicious and Falſe.

They have farther Reflected on Me as a Council, and as Pleading for Traytors; I have done it, and with ſuch Manners, as never diſguſted my Superiors: And it has been acknowledged to be for the Honour of the King and Government, to permit a fair and favourable Hearing of Council in all Caſes. There is no Reaſon that the Principles or Actions of Clients, ſhould be imputed to the Council that plead for 'em; I am ſure it is not ſo eſteem'd Abroad, or in other Places: 'Tis the greateſt Commendation that can be of the Preſent Government, that there have been no Reflections or Hardſhips upon any Council, that have appeared in any Criminal Cauſe whatſoever. Thoſe Men have been reckon'd the Greateſt and Beſt amongſt the Romans who undertook to defend Perſons under Proſecution: Sure I am, 'tis a much more difficult Province to Defend, than 'tis to Accuſe; and I hope the People are by this time ſatisfied that I was in no Fault upon that Account.

Again, they have ſaid in their Malice, that I was Conſenting to the taking off the Penal Laws and Teſt: 'Tis Falſe, and I was never ſo much as Cloſſetted to that Purpoſe. I was a Servant to the late Unhappy King; but I hope 'tis no Reflection upon any Perſon to be True to his Truſt. Had I been in the Service of this King, I ſhou'd have been as True; and as I am now to ſerve My Country and the King, I will be True to both, and Zealous in their Service to the utmoſt of my Power.

As to the other Little Reflections, I cannot value 'em ſo much as to allow 'em an Answer, but muſt deſpiſe 'em: I cou'd Recriminate, but think it better to forbear. I can gueſs who wrote the Queries, and from whence they came: One of the Candidates of the other ſide is ſo Good a Man that He freely gave his Vote for Me to be His and Your Representative, and therefore He cou'd not be the Author.

And

And now as to my *Business* you send me about : I cou'd wish, that you cou'd and wou'd Poll again, for the ascertaining *Your Opinions*, and acquainting Me *what I am to do*. I wou'd willingly undergo Three such Days Fatigue more, or stay till the beginning of the Session to know your Sentiments : And *Gentlemen*, I shall never *Vote* contrary to your *General Inclinations*, unless I can render you a satisfactory Reason why I do so.

There are but *Three Things* that can be of Concernment ; Religion, Government and Trade.

As to Religion, by the little Conversation I have had in *This Place* of late, tho' I was Born and Bred among you, and many of you were my School fellows, even till my Age of Seventeen Years, yet that is some time since. Therefore, I say, by the Conversation I have had with you of late, I take it to be your general Sentiment, that the *National Establishment Church of England*, is the best in the World, and the most Necessary, in respect of Publick Government ; its *Doctrine* the most Rational and Primitive, its *Publick Liturgy* the best fram'd, to Raise and to Express Devotion ; and I challenge any Man to shew me any Words so likely to inspire Mens Minds with Fervor and Zeal, as the *Magnificat* and *Te Deum*.

In *This Church* I have been a *Constant Communicant*, ever since the Eighteenth Year of my Age ; but yet I must declare (notwithstanding the false Imputation of it to our Church) that my *Opinion* is against Persecution ; and if some differ from me, whom I do respect and value ; I hope they will not think it my Fault, but my Misfortune. I cannot forbear thinking that no Man shou'd suffer for acting according to his *Conscience*, in Matters merely Religious : I am for Liberty of *Conscience* to those, who for *Real Conscience* cannot comply ; But I cannot much respect those Men who pretend to such a *Scrupulous Conscience*, and yet can *Occasionally Communicate* with us, on purpose to *Qualifie* themselves for an Office. I tell you therefore, that I am not for taking away the Toleration as it is Limited in the Exercise of it by the Laws of the Land, tho' that has been industriously Spread Abroad throughout the Town, as if nothing were design'd but the Silencing of those *Ministers* : No, My Aim is only to Maintain the Church, as now supported and fenc'd ; and I wish and hope, that the *Dissenters* will now be satisfied with *This*, since 'tis That, and That only, which for Twenty or Thirty Years together, They have Pray'd for, and Desir'd. We hope therefore, that They will be content with it ; and that all of us may be Happy.

As to the Government, The best we can do is to serve it, by Obedience to the Laws ; and to prevent Taxes as much as possible, unless they are of Publick Necessity to preserve the Whole ; and in case Taxes are so necessary, to take care that they be Laid Equally, and with as little Burthen to Trade as can be, which puts me in Mind of saying something to That.

And here, I hope, I shall agree with You, and You with Me, That Trade is not to be forc'd or restrain'd, but ought to have its Full Liberty. That 'tis the Interest of this Kingdom in General, as well as of this Country, that Ireland shou'd be humbled. Not that the Country shou'd be Drown'd, or the People Massacre'd (such Desires are very unsuitable to an English Temper) but that a Check be put to their bold Attempts for turning The Woollen Manufacture out of its Old Channel, by removing it from Hence, Thither. It must of necessity Impoverish Us, and I wonder our Gentry are not more sensible of the Danger ; for 'twill unavoidably lessen the Value of their Lands. Trade and Rents must be Equally Encouraged ; It is therefore the Interest of Every body to Mind this Matter, as well as of Those who are actually concern'd in the *Managery of Trade*.

These, I presume, are Your Thoughts, They are Mine, I assure You, and shall be follow'd unless You contradict it : And if at any time, any thing material should be communicated from any Body or Number of Men among You, in this Place, I shall endeavour to advance it, or convince You that 'tis either not Practicable, or Unreasonable. Tho' I am to be govern'd by my Own Judgment in my Vote, Yet if I can make it comply with the Thoughts of those whom I Represent in the House of Commons, I shall always be glad of it ; for in some respects I take my self to be Your Advocate, and I am to do what You wou'd do if Your Opinions were known. I have one thing more to take Notice of, it's that which is extremely to my Satisfaction : Not only that This Election is so Fair, Regular, and Free ; but that I came in by the Interest of The Church of England, and by the Chamber of this City, as well as by the hearty Endeavours of the good Trading People here ; and I may add, with the General Approbation of the Gentry of Devon, as well as the good Will of The Right Reverend Father in God, the Lord Bishop of this Diocess, who is much Your Friend, and has us'd his utmost endeavours for the Promotion of the Wool-Bill : I was an Eye and Ear witness of it ; I was present with Him from Nine till One for several days together, four or five days a Week, for a long time. His Labours were great as was his Zeal for Your service : and I am morally assur'd that He will repeat His Endeavours the Next Sessions, and so will I with all my Heart, and shall be very warm as long as I am in Your service to promote the good of this City, the Place of my Birth and Education. And God preserve King William, and the City of Exeter.